

Bangalore Mirror

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BSWML's grand plan to spend around Rs 32 crore for workshops and refresher trainings on solid waste management to staffers has not gone down well with civic activists — can't you use that money to actually keep city clean, they ask

TRAINED TO WASTE MONEY

I Y Maheswara Reddy
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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML), which is already at the receiving end for not managing waste in the city, has raised more eyebrows with its latest masterplan. It has floated a short-term tender inviting bidders to conduct workshops on Swachh Survekshan, Solid Waste Management and implementation of effective waste management. The cost of organising the workshops is estimated at around Rs 32 crore.

The BSWML has divided the work into eight packages and the amount put for each package is between Rs 269 lakh and Rs 489



File photo of pourakarmikas gathered at Palace Grounds for the silver jubilee celebration of Pourakarmika Maha Sangha

lakh. Packages 5 and 6 are meant conducting advanced level training for 50 of the staff including executive and technical, supervisory and pourakarmikas, drivers and helpers across themes of Solid Waste Management, Sanitation and Used Water management under Swachh Bharat Mission. The amount allocated is Rs 489 lakh each for package 5 and 6. The second highest allocation is Rs 488 lakh each for packages 7 and 8 to provide refresher training for 50% of the staff including executive, technical and pourakarmikas, and staffs across these of Solid Waste Management, Sanitation

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 >>

SPORTS / PAGE 7

CHAMPS' PLAY

England come close, but Sanju Samson's 89-run carnage powers India through to the finals



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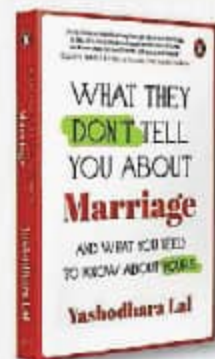
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THINGS TO DO
01 Knot so simple

Atta Galatta is hosting the launch of 'What They Don't Tell You About Marriage', a practical guide to long-term relationships. Couples' therapist Yashodhara Lal will be in conversation with Radhika Mohta, matchmaker and relationship coach, for a candid discussion on love, conflict and commitment. **Where:** Atta Galatta, Indiranagar; **When:** March 8, 7 pm

**02 Heritage reimagined**

Internationally recognised visual artist Dr Akhter Husain presents Vedic Inspirations, a solo exhibition exploring India's spiritual and civilisational heritage through a contemporary visual language. **Where:** Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath; **When:** Until March 8, 10.30 am to 6 pm

03 Pitch perfect

Ekatvam, an initiative of the Entrust Foundation, is bringing the Holi Music Fest 2026, a grand three-day celebration of musical togetherness, artistic excellence, and cultural heritage. **Where:** The Bangalore Gayana Samaja, Basavanagudi; **When:** March 6, 7 & 8, 5 pm

**04 Tunes and treats**

SOCIAL is marking Women's Day with a two-day celebration designed exclusively for women. On March 7, starting 7 pm, a women-only karaoke takeover will be held. On March 8, every woman who walks in (any SOCIAL outlet) till 7 pm will receive a special treat. **Where:** Indiranagar SOCIAL; **When:** March 7, 7 pm

05 Text and context

Arunava Sinha will be in conversation with iter and editor Shinnie Antony for a wide-ranging discussion on the making of The Bengal Reader, the evolution of Bengali literature, and the politics and possibilities of translation. **Where:** Atta Galatta, Indiranagar; **When:** March 6, 5 pm

Repeated power tariff revisions worry industry stakeholders

Karnataka trade body urges balanced approach to tariffs to avoid disproportionately burdening industries, cautions that frequent revisions could increase financial strain

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

The Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI) has expressed concern over the revised power tariff and opined that repeated tariff revisions within short intervals create uncertainty for business planning and adversely impact Karnataka's ease of doing business. The FKCCI said the cumulative impact of this revision, along with the ongoing regular annual tariff determination process currently under consideration before the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC), may further escalate power costs for industry. The FKCCI has reiterated that it has made every possible effort at every stage to safeguard the interests of industry through detailed legal submissions, financial analysis, and policy arguments.

"The FKCCI is examining the detailed order and consulting experts to assess the further course of action available under law. We urge the government and regulators to ensure a balanced approach that protects agriculture while not disproportionately burdening industry, which remains the backbone of employment generation and economic growth in Karnataka. The FKCCI has been actively participating in the tariff proceedings before the KERC in the matter of Review Petition No 08/2025 filed by the ESCOMs," said FKCCI President



Uma Reddy.

The FKCCI said that the ESCOMs had sought revision of tariff citing subsidy shortfall relating to agricultural consumers (LT-4A category). "We filed detailed objections opposing the proposed tariff enhancement and strongly argued that tariff determination under the Electricity Act, 2003, is a statutory exercise and cannot be reopened merely on account of a government budget allocation mismatch. We emphasised that industries in Karnataka are already bearing one of the highest cross-subsidy burdens in the country, and any further increase would severely affect competitiveness, investments, exports, and MSME sustainability," the FKCCI President said.

She said that as a conse-

quence of this judgment by KERC, energy charges for LT and HT industrial and commercial consumers have been increased compared to the earlier tariff order dated March 27, 2025. "This effectively restores a higher level of cross-subsidy contribution from industry and commerce, resulting in an additional financial burden on productive sectors across the state. The KERC order lacks structural clarity and leaves several critical implementation aspects ambiguous. The judgment does not clearly specify whether the revised charges are to be collected retrospectively or adjusted prospectively through the monthly billing cycle. Additionally, the order does not explicitly state whether the revised tariff will attract the applicable 9 per cent Electricity Tax, creating

further uncertainty," she said.

The Karnataka Small Scale Industries Association (KASSIA) said that it opposes the revision of power tariff, stating that the KERC order raises serious concerns as retrospective tariff revisions undermine regulatory certainty and adversely affect the functioning of industries. KASSIA General Secretary SM Hussain said that no regulatory decision should be implemented retrospectively in a manner that

KERC order raises serious concerns as retrospective tariff revisions undermine regulatory certainty and adversely affect functioning of industries, says small scale industries association

disturbs the financial planning and operational stability of businesses, particularly MSMEs that operate with limited margins.

He said the retrospective billing will impose a financial burden on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). "Most industries have already determined their product pricing and financial projections based on the tariff order issued on 27-03-2025 for FY 2025-26. Imposing additional charges now through back-billing will result in liabilities running into lakhs of rupees, which industries cannot recover from customers as the goods have already been supplied and payments settled," he said.

Mother denied daughter's custody due to sex trafficking allegations

The Karnataka High Court has refused to grant custody of a young woman to her mother after allegations emerged that the mother had earlier pushed the girl back into prostitution even after she was rescued from a trafficking racket. The court held that when serious accusations of exploitation are made against a parent, restoring custody would not be appropriate.

The case arose after the girl, who was a minor at the time, was rescued during a police raid conducted by the Electronic City police at a lodge where prostitution activities were allegedly being carried out.

Subsequently, the girl's mother approached the court seeking custody of her daughter. She contended that the girl had since attained the age of majority and therefore should be released



from institutional care and allowed to return home. The trial court, however, rejected the request. It took note of the fact that the girl had earlier been rescued in a similar case and had been returned to her mother's custody. According to the material placed before court, there were allegations that after being taken back home, the girl was once again forced into prostitution, allegedly at the behest of her mother.

Challenging this order, the mother

approached the High Court, which observed that the allegations against the mother were grave and could not be ignored while deciding the question of custody. The judge noted that courts must remain cautious in cases involving trafficking and sexual exploitation, as the safety and welfare of the rescued individual must take precedence over all other considerations.

During the hearing, the court also questioned the State authorities on why the mother had not been made an accused in the criminal case despite allegations suggesting that she may have played a role in forcing the girl into prostitution.

The court observed that the mere fact that the girl had turned eighteen could not automatically entitle the mother to claim custody, particularly

in light of the serious allegations involved. Finding no grounds to interfere with the trial court's order, the High Court dismissed the petition.

Identity checks on migrant workers urged

The Karnataka High Court has recommended that the State government consider framing guidelines for background verification, identity confirmation and possible registration of inter-state migrant workers, particularly those engaged in domestic or construction work. The court made the observation while deciding a criminal appeal arising out of a triple murder case involving migrant workers employed in a private residence.

A division bench of Justice HP Sandesh and Justice Venkatesh Naik stressed the need for preventive safe-

guards and stronger enforcement of existing labour and criminal regulatory mechanisms. The bench observed that many employers engage workers who stay within their premises without conducting basic verification, which can create security risks. It therefore suggested the introduction of a structured and mandatory police verification mechanism before hiring such workers, similar to tenant verification systems.

At the same time, the bench cautioned that any such regulatory measures must not lead to the stigmatisation of migrant workers as a group. The judges therefore stressed the need for "balanced judicial directions aimed at regulation, awareness, and accountability without discrimination which would serve the larger interest of public safety and social justice."

IN HIGH COURT

Craters vs commuters

AI road scanner flags hundreds of cavities across key Bengaluru corridor, spotlighting alarming neglect on vital urban traffic link



Dashcam data used to detect potholes and map road hazards

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TWEETS @BangaloreMirror

A citizen-led drive using an AI-powered pothole detection model has revealed alarming road conditions on the busy Bannerghatta-Attibele stretch in Bengaluru. During an on-the-spot survey ride, the device recorded over 300 potholes on Bannerghatta Road alone, highlighting the poor state of infrastructure on one of the city's most heavily used commuter corridors. The findings raise concerns about road safety, daily travel delays and the urgent need for timely maintenance. A spot ride was recently conducted by Caleb Friesen and Virendra Suryawanshi of Anomaly Labs, who have developed an AI-powered model to detect and map potholes. Bangalore Mirror had earlier featured their innovative work using artificial intelligence to identify road damage and compile real-time data.

During a 16 km drive along one of the busiest stretches in Bengaluru's South Zone, their system detected a significant number of potholes. The findings left the team shocked, highlighting the alarming state of infrastructure on a road that witnesses heavy daily traffic and is considered a key arterial stretch in the city.

Caleb Friesen, a content creator who covers the Indian start-up ecosystem through his YouTube channel Runtime, said he intentionally began his ride on Bannerghatta Road at 6.30 am to avoid peak-hour congestion. "At that time, traffic was relatively light and I never felt immediately unsafe. But I can easily imagine how much more dangerous it would be even an hour later, when vehicles begin to crowd the stretch," he said.

Riding an electric motorcycle, he pointed out that its high torque allows him to accelerate quickly and move out of risky situations. "That's an advantage I have. Most commuters are on low-powered scooters or regular bikes. If their suspension cannot absorb a deep pothole and

Citizen survey using dashcam analytics reveals severe roadway damage, dust, obstacles and smoke hazards threatening motorists during daily south-city travel routes

they lose balance while traffic is moving fast behind them, it can become extremely precarious," he explained.

He described the potholes on the stretch as some of the deepest he has encountered. In addition, he flagged thick dust accumulation along the shoulders, abruptly disappearing lanes, roadside obstacles and even burning garbage emitting smoke across the roadway as serious safety and health hazards. "For two-wheeler riders, it feels like a ticking time bomb," he warned.

Anomaly Labs' AI model detected nearly 303 potholes along Bannerghatta Road. Using a YOLO segmentation model trained on 47,000 global pothole images, the system analyses videos frame by frame, marking road damage. However, due to the global dataset, several false positives had to be manually removed. The team is now building India's largest crowdsourced pothole dataset, with 68 contributors across 12 cities. They have also created a dashcam pipeline where detected potholes automatically become new training data, helping improve accuracy for Indian road conditions.

Virendra Suryawanshi, founder of Anomaly Labs, said Caleb's Bannerghatta Road dashcam video was recently tested on the system to show how accurately it can identify and outline potholes. He added that the pipeline converts ordinary dashcam footage into a structured pothole dataset. The aim is to build India's largest public pothole database and encourage citizens to share dashcam footage to help make roads safer.

Snatchers strike shops, one arrested

A condiment shop owner from Vaddarahalli village under Madanayakanahalli Police Station filed a complaint on January 29, 2026, alleging that two men snatched his gold chain and fled. Police said the victim was running his shop when the accused arrived in a car, bought a cigarette and paid via Paytm. When

they asked for another cigarette, one grabbed the shopkeeper and tried to snatch his chain. The same night, another shopkeeper in Muniyachana-palya said two men on a motorcycle snatched his 24-gram mangalya chain. Police later arrested one accused and recovered 4 lakh worth of gold. -BMB

Gold loot worth ₹24L recovered

A resident living near Kashi Vishwanath Temple under the Kadugodi Police Station limits filed a complaint of house theft on February 9, 2026. Police said a father and son had left for work on February 8 night. When they returned the next day, they found their front door broken

and gold jewellery and cash missing. Acting on a tip-off, police apprehended a suspect near Kadugodi Channasandra Main Road on February 12 and recovered two pairs of gold earrings. During interrogation, he confessed to house burglaries. Police later recovered 160 grams of gold jewellery worth 24.5 lakh. -BMB

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Bengaluru chasing tech glory, corporations chasing funds

Massive funding demand raised by five city corporations as infrastructure maintenance, salaries and waste management costs strain civic finances

| Sridhar Vivan
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TWEETS @sridharvMirror

With the restructuring of civic administration under the Greater Bengaluru Authority, requests for more than ₹8,500 crore in grants have been made to the state government by the five newly formed city corporations in Bengaluru to fund development and day-to-day administration. The first budgets for the 2026-27 financial year are expected to be presented by the civic bodies by the end of this month, and hopes are being pinned on a generous allocation in the upcoming state budget. It has been indicated by officials that the corporations will be heavily dependent on state support, as their own revenue sources may not be sufficient to meet rising infrastructure and administrative expenses.

The five corporations — Bengaluru South City Corporation, Bengaluru East City Corporation, Bengaluru West City Corporation, Bengaluru North City Corporation and Bengaluru Central City Corporation — have collectively sought ₹8,342 crore in financial assistance. According to officials, a request for ₹2,047 crore has been made by Bengaluru South, ₹1,685 crore by East, ₹1,725 crore by West, ₹1,210 crore by North, and around ₹1,675 crore



by Central. The demand was placed before the chairman of the Fifth State Finance Commission, C Narayanaswamy, and a report was later submitted to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in which a grant of nearly ₹9,000 crore was recommended.

It has been pointed out by officials that limited scope for launching major infrastructure projects is available to the corporations. Instead, the focus is expected to be

largely placed on the maintenance of roads, footpaths, lakes, parks, public toilets, schools and hospitals. Despite the creation of the civic bodies, infrastructure gaps continue to be faced across Bengaluru, not only in the city centre but also in nearly 110 peripheral villages that were earlier merged under the civic administration. A special grant of about ₹2,200 crore was released by the government last year, and several major

roads were asphalted, though many ward level roads are still reported to be neglected.

The five corporations are expected to generate around ₹5,850 crore annually through property tax, building plan approvals, road cutting charges and advertisement revenue. Of this, about ₹4,500 crore is expected to come from property tax

According to officials, a request for ₹2,047 crore has been made by Bengaluru South, ₹1,685 crore by East, ₹1,725 crore by West, ₹1,210 crore by North, and around ₹1,675 crore by Central

alone. However, it has been stated by officials that these revenues will barely cover operational expenses. Nearly 1,980 km of arterial and sub-arterial roads and more than 13,400 km of ward level roads are required to be maintained. Administrative costs are projected to cross ₹3,400 crore annually. "If the state allocation falls short of expectations, some of the newly formed corporations with weaker revenue bases could face financial strain, raising concerns about the pace of development works across the expanding city", said an official.

Activists urge clear implementation roadmap

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and used Water Management under Swachh Bharat Mission. Package 1 has been allocated Rs 318 lakh, Rs 279 lakh for package 2, Rs 349 lakh each for package 3 and 4. However, social activists and residents have opposed the plan to spend such huge amounts on workshops and capacity building programmes. "This is nothing but a scheme to pocket the money. Why can't the authorities use the existing infrastructure and the staff to keep Bengaluru clean? The authorities should have taken the public into confidence while taking a decision to spend such a huge amount," said Shivakumar V, a social activist.

HM Venkatesh, another activist, said the tender notification has mentioned 50% of the staff, but does not reveal the total employees. "The tender notification lacks transparency. We have seen elected representatives and officials undertake foreign trips to study international cleanliness standards but Bengaluru has not benefited from such trips," he said. Vinod Jacob, an urban strategist and civic planner, said that aligning with the Swachh Bharat Mission's vision for a cleaner India, keeping Bengaluru our IT capital spotless like any global metropolis is paramount. "Yet, the amount allocated for training and development mirrors multinational corporate costs, not the mission's focus on tangible action. We need urgent investment in ground-level equipment and manpower, plus rigorous maintenance of assets

like toilets, DWCCs, shredders, trucks, autos, mechanical sweepers, compactors, and bins, which lie neglected. Don't we have qualified engineers and staff at BSWML to drive this already? Taxpayers' money must fuel Swachh Bharat's goals through judicious, productive resources that truly deliver results," he said.

Poornima Shetty, creative strategist and president of United RWA of Konena Agrahara, said capacity building is important, but Bengaluru's waste challenges are rooted in gaps in enforcement, monitoring, and transparency.

“We need urgent investment in ground-level equipment and manpower, plus rigorous maintenance of assets like toilets, DWCCs, shredders, trucks, autos, mechanical sweepers, compactors, and bins, which lie neglected

— Vinod Jacob, an urban strategist

"Any significant public expenditure must be linked to measurable outcomes, independent audits, and ward-level public reporting. Without a clear accountability framework, training alone will not deliver the systemic change the city urgently needs. Training initiatives under Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 must therefore be aligned with a clear implementation roadmap to ensure meaningful and measurable impact," said Shetty.

Mysore Road bridge repair brings traffic curbs



In view of the steel girder replacement work on the railway bridge from Mysore Road to Bengaluru University Main Road under Jnanabharathi Traffic Police Station limits and the Bangalore City Commissionerate, traffic will be temporarily restricted from 6 pm to 12 pm on February 6, to maintain public safety and ensure smooth traffic flow. The traffic officials have provided alternate routes for citizens to ensure a seamless commute during the bridge repair work.

As per the directive, vehicles coming from Mysore Road towards Bengaluru University alongside Ullal Ring Road can proceed via Jnanabharathi Junction, take a right turn at Jairamdas Junction, and continue through Muthyalanagar Government Press Road. From there, the public can take a right turn near the BPED Ground to reach Bengaluru University. Similarly, vehicles moving from Ullal Junction and Mariyappanapalya Junction towards Jnanabharathi Junction and Mysore Road have been advised to take alternate routes via Bengaluru University Head Office Circle, Nagarbhavi Main Road, and Nagarbhavi Ring Road for smoother movement. — BMB

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Air pollution

Devarachikkanahalli



Garbage burning near a park in front of the RTO at Devarachikkanahalli is releasing thick smoke and causing severe air pollution in the area.

Damaged road

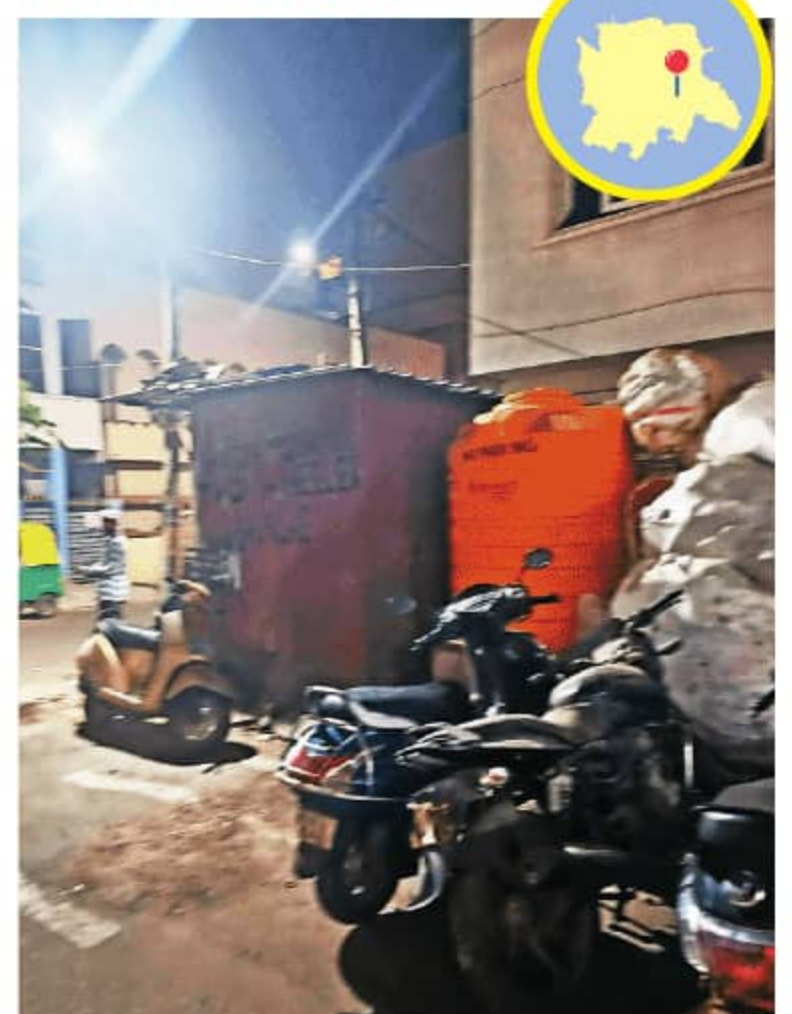
RT Nagar



Residents flag severely damaged road conditions at 18th Cross, 1st Block, RT Nagar, behind a pre-university college.

Garbage nuisance

Wilson Garden



Garbage dumped in front of the rear gate of a house at 15, 1st Cross, Wilson Garden has rendered the gate unusable.

Spot of shame: Open urinal festers behind rotting vehicles

Citizens raise concern over accumulating waste and abandoned vehicles creating health and safety risk near RK Colony in JP Nagar

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Traffic police are required to seize vehicles that remain parked and unused on roads or vacant sites for more than 21 days. Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) and the city corporations are authorised to penalise individuals for urinating in public places, with efforts underway to reduce yellow spots and improve Bengaluru's ranking in the Swachh Survekshan survey. However, the situation at RK Colony, JP Nagar 2nd Phase, between Ranga Shankara and Innisfree School, tells a different story. Yellow spots, accumulated garbage, and stationary or abandoned vehicles indicate that maintenance and enforcement measures in the area have not been effectively implemented.

With no action taken to remove abandoned vehicles or clear heaps of garbage, the lane has increasingly become a spot for dumping waste and open defecation. Despite the JP Nagar Police Station being located just a few hundred metres away, it remains unclear how long these vehicles have been left untended on the road. Residents have raised concerns that the abandoned vehicles often serve as shelter for miscreants at night, posing safety risks to pedestrians, particularly women.

"I complained to the Bengaluru South City Corporation (BSCC) but they said that it is the responsibility of the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) to keep the lane free from accumulated garbage. I appeal to the BSWML authorities to remove



Mounting garbage and abandoned vehicles have allegedly turned spot into dumping ground and area frequently used for public urination

With no action taken to remove abandoned vehicles or clear heaps of garbage, lane has allegedly turned into spot for waste dumping; authorities say measures will be taken soon to resolve issue

garbage and prevent people urinating on the roadside," said a homemaker pleading anonymity.

Srikanth S, a pedestrian, urged the authorities to keep the lane free from abandoned vehicles and garbage. He cautioned that if these issues are not addressed, the area could become a gathering spot for anti-social elements and miscreants. "The police station is a few hundred metres away from this lane. The Bengaluru South City Corporation offices are also situated in the vicinity. I do not know why the authorities concerned failed to keep this lane free from the nuisance and yellow spots," he said.

Expressing a similar opinion, Gurumurthy S, a pedestri-



an, said the yellow spots are not only an eyesore but also a health hazard. "It is difficult to cope with the stench emanating from yellow spots. I demand the BSCC and the BSWML authorities not only to clear garbage and stationary vehicles but also engage volunteers to beautify the entire lane," he said.

JP Nagar Traffic Police Inspector has assured that abandoned vehicles in the area will be removed. "My subordinates will visit the spot to verify the abandoned vehicles," said the Traffic Police Inspector.

BSWML Assistant General Manager Swetha stated that measures would be taken to clear the garbage and improve the appearance of yellow spots.

Strict directives to safeguard public health

In a comprehensive review meeting on March 5, 2026, Bengaluru East City Corporation Commissioner DS Ramesh issued strict directions to enhance public health and safety across the East Zone.

The Commissioner focused on reforms in trade licensing, mandating licences for small and medium enterprises as well as private medical establishments, revising fees, introducing auto-renewal, and simplifying documen-

tation. A proposal on these regulatory measures will be submitted to the committee headed by the Chief Commissioner of the Greater Bengaluru Authority.

Emphasising tobacco control, officials were instructed to conduct raids on shops selling tobacco within 100 metres of schools and colleges under COTPA provisions. Medium and highly hazardous trades will now face mandatory continuous inspections, with strict action

against violations of health and safety norms.

Public safety in rooftop restaurants was also highlighted, with directives ensuring kitchen facilities are not located directly on rooftops. Officials were further instructed to inspect basement commercial activities, monitor bulk waste generation, and regulate businesses on narrow residential roads, framing SOPs in coordination with the Greater Bengaluru Authority. **-BMB**

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Uproar over candidates selected for KAS interview

A controversy has erupted over the recruitment process of the Karnataka Public Service Commission after the results of the KAS (Gazetted Probationers) Group A and B main examination were announced. In an unprecedented development in KPSC's history, 15 candidates who wrote the main examination in the same room have been shortlisted for the interview stage. Adding to the suspicion, three members from the same family have also qualified for the personality test, prompting several candidates to question the integrity of the examination process.

The recruitment drive was notified on February 26, 2024 for 384 Group A and B posts. The examination had earlier drawn criticism due to multiple errors in the Kannada translation of the question paper, following which the government ordered a re-examination that was conducted in May 2025. A shortlist of candidates was later released in a 1:3 ratio for the main exam. With the latest results now declared, candidates have taken to social media demanding transparency. In response to the growing uproar, Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh has directed the commission to submit a detailed report. **-BMB**

Students found using narcotics in surprise drug test in colleges

In a surprise anti-drug drive, police from the Western division in Bengaluru conducted drug tests on more than 1,000 students from eight private degree colleges as part of a drug awareness programme. Inspections were carried out in eight colleges and two hostels under the Vijayanagar subdivision. During the checks, a few students were found to have consumed drugs. Officials said these students will be referred to de-addiction support under the 'Sannithra' initiative, where police will work with parents to help them overcome substance dependence.

Police said the campaign was launched after investigations in recent drug cases revealed that students are among the key consumers in the drug supply network that has been spreading into educational institutions. With the consent of college managements, the tests were conducted with support from private hospitals that provided testing kits and staff. Under the 'Sannithra' programme introduced by Karnataka Director General of Police MA Saleem, students found using drugs will undergo counselling to understand the reasons behind their addiction and will be guided towards rehabilitation, while authorities continue monitoring to prevent drug abuse on campuses. **-BMB**

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Leopard sightings spark village terror

Frequent leopard sightings, livestock losses, and shrinking forest buffers around Savandurga push anxious villagers to demand urgent forest department intervention

| Garima Prasher
garima.prasher@timesofindia.com

TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

For months now, villagers around the Savandurga Reserve Forest have been living in fear that a leopard may emerge from the forest area and attack them. Residents say sightings have increased in recent days, with people in Jyotipalya in Magadi taluk spotting a big cat on February 25.

"Our neighbour has a CCTV camera which showed a big cat roaming around on February 25. I have seen pug marks barely 20 feet from my house. I have lost three dogs in leopard attacks over the last few years. It is only a matter of time before one of these animals attacks a human," said a resident of Jyotipalya. Villagers say incidents of livestock and pet animals going missing have also increased in recent months. Apart from pet dogs, residents claim stray dogs and small goats have disappeared from the area. "The way things are progressing, it feels like it is only a matter of time before one of the straying big cats attacks a person," said another villager. Veterinarians working in nearby areas say they regularly treat animals injured in leopard attacks. "We see at least one case of an animal with leopard-inflicted wounds every couple of months," a veterinarian said.

Some residents have also raised concerns about environmental changes around the forest. "I came here on February 24 to visit a relative. Since then, I have witnessed three fire incidents in different parts of the forest. The vegetation along the forest line has visibly reduced over the last few years," another resident added. Experts say shrinking buffer zones, loss of habitat and prey base, and changing animal behaviour are pushing



Flames spread across the forest line at night, with residents reporting multiple fire incidents and visible reduction in vegetation density

Residents near Savandurga Reserve Forest report rising leopard movement, pet losses, and habitat changes. Officials say stray dogs and encroachment attract big cats closer, prompting monitoring and relocation efforts

big cats closer to human settlements. According to the Karnataka Forest Department (KFD), poaching is unlikely to be the reason for the increased sightings. Instead, officials point to the abundance of prey such as stray dogs and domesticated animals near villages, along with habitat encroachment, as factors drawing leopards closer to human habitation.

Officials said villages around the forest patch, including Chunchunkuppe, Madapatna and Donnehalli, are frequently visited by leopards. A senior KFD

official said Savandurga's rocky scrub forest provides suitable habitat for the species, and the availability of easy prey near forest fringes may be encouraging their presence. Following repeated complaints from residents of Chunchunkuppe and nearby villages, forest officials recently conducted a leopard capture and relocation operation to mitigate conflict in the area. Officials added that monitoring has been intensified and teams are responding to fresh complaints from residents, especially during night patrols.

State to launch family ID

The Karnataka government is preparing to introduce the Karnataka Family (Registration and Maintenance) Bill, 2025, in the Legislative Assembly, aiming to assign a unique identification number to every family in the state. The initiative is expected to strengthen digital governance by creating a unified database that ensures subsidies, services and welfare benefits reach eligible beneficiaries directly.

More than just an identification number, the Family ID system is intended to become a technological foundation for designing government schemes based on accurate data. The proposed legislation will also provide legal backing to the system, under which a Karnataka Family Authority will be established to manage and maintain comprehensive data on every family in the state.

Under the plan, each fam-

ily will receive a unique nine-digit number generated using advanced information technology algorithms. Similar to how Aadhaar identifies individuals, this number will recognise the family as a single unit.

The system will map family members based on blood relations or marriage, centred on the head of the household. Data will automatically update with events such as births, deaths or marriages.

Once created, the Family ID will function like a digital profile or wallet, linking government subsidies, certificates and licences directly to that family.

Sources said that the system is also expected to help identify and remove ineligible or fake beneficiaries from existing subsidy and ration schemes by integrating data across departments. — BMB

Labour law relief for traders

In a significant development for small traders, the Bangalore Wholesale Cloth Merchants Association (BWCMA) met Santosh Lad, Karnataka's Labour Minister, at Vikas Soudha to seek the simplification of labour laws for small establishments.

Led by BWCMA President Prakash Pirgal, the delegation submitted a memorandum highlighting key demands, including exemption from labour laws for establishments employing fewer than 10 workers, online-only renewal of labour certificates, removal of separate certification requirements for godowns within 200 metres of the main shop, and an end to routine inspections for small traders.

Responding positively, the minister assured that no inspections would be conducted for establishments with fewer

than 10 employees. He also stated that the maintenance of records and registers under Section 24 of the Shops Act would be exempted for such units and that the changes would be implemented soon.

The Minister further announced that the Labour Department, in collaboration with the BWCMA and other trade bodies, would organise large-scale awareness programmes on labour laws in April. Senior officials, including Labour Department Secretary Salma Fahim and Labour Commissioner Dr Gopalakrishna, attended the meeting. Office-bearers and committee members of the BWCMA were also present.

Traders described the meeting as a significant step towards easing compliance and reducing the harassment of small businesses. — BMB

Cooking oil costs rise amid war

The ongoing tensions in the Middle East have begun affecting household budgets in India, with cooking oil prices rising sharply across markets. Compared to last week, the price of oil has increased by about ₹4 to ₹5 per litre, and traders warn it may rise by another ₹10 to ₹15 in the coming week if the conflict continues. The increase is largely linked to disruptions in global supply chains, which have pushed up import and transportation costs. India imports a significant share of its oil, including sunflower and palm oil, from countries such as Ukraine and Russia, as well as from parts of the Middle East. Shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz have faced disruptions, with reports that Iran has halted more than 100 vessels, forcing ships to take the longer route via the Cape of Good Hope. As a result, import costs have surged, leading to price hikes in the domestic market. Retail prices of major brands have risen from ₹161 to ₹165 per litre. — BMB

Hormuz crisis hits gas supplies

India's GAIL (India) said on Thursday it will assess curbing supplies to natural gas customers after receiving a force majeure notice from long-term supplier Petronet LNG over constraints on vessels as conflict escalates in the Middle East.

The US-Israel war with Iran has disrupted fuel shipments from the Gulf, affecting India's LNG imports from Qatar. Attacks in the region have nearly halted oil and LNG transit through the Strait of Hormuz. GAIL said Petronet's LNG allocation to it has been cut to zero from March 4, and the impact of the force majeure remains unclear.

LNG supplies to GAIL from other sources remain unaffected, the company said in a stock exchange filing. Petronet LNG issued a force majeure notice to QatarEnergy and buyers including GAIL and Indian Oil Corp



Gas bottles and storage tanks are seen at a Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) factory in Pinto, near Madrid, on Thursday

after tankers failed to reach the Ras Laffan terminal. GAIL and IOC have already cut supplies to industrial customers. India imported 27 million tonnes of LNG in 2024-25, nearly half its gas use, mostly from Qatar.

Separately, ONGC Petro Additions said it is running its Dahej gas cracker at drastically lower capacity due to falling gas and feedstock supplies, which will affect downstream petrochemical plants. — BMB

India seeks shield for oil

India is in talks with the United States to secure marine cover for vessels shipping oil from the Middle East, as New Delhi looks to protect buyers from potential supply disruptions caused by the Gulf crisis, a government official said on Thursday. "So far we are comfortable," the official said, adding that the oil ministry is in discussions with major producers and traders to secure oil, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG). US President Donald Trump has directed the US International Development Finance Corporation to provide political risk insurance and financial guarantees for maritime trade in the Gulf.

The US Navy could also begin escorting vessels through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow shipping route between Iran and Oman that carries about a fifth of global oil and gas supplies. India, the world's third-largest oil importer, relies on the Middle East for about 40 per cent of its crude



Tankers are seen off the coast of the Fujairah amid the U.S.-Israel conflict with Iran (File)

imports and nearly 85-90 per cent of LPG imports. India is exploring crude purchases from multiple sources, including Russia, and has increased oil and LPG imports from the United States. At the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi, US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau said Washington is willing to help meet India's energy needs.

Lower Middle East supplies have disrupted operations, with Mangalore Refinery suspending fuel exports and companies cutting gas supplies after Qatar halted production. India may reprioritise gas allocation if shortages worsen. — BMB

**WAR ZONE
UPDATES**

Team beats England by 7 runs to set up final vs NZ

It's final: India make it happen

India clinched a thrilling seven-run victory over England in the second semi-final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup at the iconic Wankhede Stadium to set up a final date with New Zealand at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. The Men in Blue are now just one step away from becoming the first team to defend their T20 World Cup crown and lift the title twice.

Batting first, India posted 253/7 against England, powered by Sanju Samson's explosive 89 off 42 balls. Samson continued his rich form in the tournament, smashing 89 off 42 balls, laced with eight fours and seven sixes. The right-hander dominated the England bowlers from the outset and anchored India's innings with aggressive strokeplay across the ground.

After Abhishek Sharma fell early for nine, Samson stitched a crucial 97-run partnership for the second wicket with Ishan Kishan, who made a quickfire 39 off 18 balls. Samson then added another 43 runs for the third wicket alongside Shivam Dube, who contributed a brisk 43 off 25 deliveries.

Samson brought up his half-century in just 26 balls, his second successive fifty in the tournament, before eventually falling while attempting an expansive shot, caught by Phil Salt off Will Jacks.

Late cameos from Hardik Pandya, who scored 27 off 12 balls, and Tilak Varma, who struck 21 off just seven balls, helped India surge past the 250 mark. For England, Will Jacks and Adil Rashid picked up two wickets each but struggled to contain India's aggressive batting display.

Coming to the chase, England suffered early setbacks as Pandya, Jasprit Bumrah and Varun Chakaravathy picked one wicket each in the powerplay, but the



India
253/7
(20)

England
246/7
(20)

1. Indian cricket fans cheer on their team
2. England's Jacob Bethell, left, and Will Jacks run between the wickets; 3. Bollywood actors Anil Kapoor, Varun Dhawan, left, and Reliance Foundation chairperson Nita Ambani, right, during the semifinal cricket match between India and England, at the Wankhede Stadium, on Thursday; 4.

Bollywood actors Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt; 5. India's Hardik Pandya, left, celebrates with captain Suryakumar Yadav after the dismissal of England's Phil Salt; 6. India's Sanju Samson celebrates his half century.

Englishmen looked unfazed by the blows to take their total to 68/3 at the end of the sixth over.

Though the 2022 champions' top-order faltered, middle-order batter Jacob Bethell kept his side in the hunt with a brilliant century, the

third fastest for England. He shared crucial partnerships with Jos Buttler and Tom Banton before bringing up a game-changing 77-run stand with Will Jacks and a 50-run stand with Sam Curran, which kept the momentum swiftly hanging in balance.

However, Pandya dismissing Curran in the penultimate over mounted pressure on England. Though Bethell kept going and gave his best, clutch bowling from Bumrah and Pandya in the death meant England needed 30 off the final over. With Dube given charge

of bowling the last over, a brilliant fielding display led to Bethell's dismissal off the first delivery, putting an end to England's hopes as India restricted Brook-led side to 246/7 in 20 overs.

The Harry Brook-led side fell short by eight runs as India marched into the final for a second consecutive time.

-IANS



Final match

Ahmedabad

New Zealand V/S India

07.00 pm

Samson levels with Virat Kohli, races past Rohit

Indian batter Sanju Samson played a statement knock against England in the semi-final of the T20 World Cup at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium, equalling batting icon Virat Kohli's record for most runs by an Indian in a T20 World Cup knockout.

Brimming with confidence and authority after a masterclass 97* against West Indies in the final Super Eight clash, a virtual knockout clash, Sanju continued his fine form, shrugging off the mental demons due to past failures this year, scoring 89 in 42 balls, with eight fours and seven sixes at a strike rate of 211.90.

Virat had also smashed 89* in 47 balls against the West Indies in the semifinal of the 2016 T20 World Cup at the same venue. The highest score by a batter in T20WC knockouts was made yesterday by New Zealand batter Finn Allen, who scored a record-breaking 100* in just 33 balls while chasing 170 against South Africa at Kolkata's Eden Gardens. This stands as the fastest century across T20 and 50-over World Cups.



Samson has been exceptional against slow deliveries in the T20 World Cup, scoring 71 runs in 28 balls at an average of 35.30 and at a strike rate of 253.57, with five fours and seven sixes. Notably, slower/pace-off deliveries have been India's weakness in this T20 World Cup overall.

Samson, with his 16 maximums this edition, went past Rohit Sharma's 15 sixes in the 2024 edition to have the most sixes by an Indian during a single T20 WC edition.

In this tournament, Sanju has made 232 runs in four matches at an average of 77.33, with a strike rate of 201.73, with two fifties, and a best score of 97* coming against West Indies at Kolkata in a virtual quarterfinal.

-ANI

Highest totals

260-6 Sri Lanka vs. Kenya, Johannesburg, 2007

256-4 India vs. Zimbabwe, Chennai, 2026

254-6 West Indies vs. Zimbabwe, Mumbai, 2026

253-7 India vs. England, Mumbai, 2026

246-7 England vs. India, Mumbai, 2026

235-5 Ireland vs. Oman, Colombo, 2026

230-8 England vs. South Africa, Mumbai, 2016

Walkability missing: Citizen demand 'Tender SURE' footpaths

Following a directive from the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), local Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) have stepped up their demands for safer streets, calling for a significant shift in how the city's suburban corridors are designed.

GBA Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed officials

to develop 50 kilometres of safe, pedestrian-friendly footpaths within the Mahadevapura zone. The directive, which sets a tight two-month deadline for completion, targets areas along the Purple Line metro corridor to ensure seamless last-mile connectivity.

The Commissioner's announcement has triggered a wave of similar requests from communities. The

Horamavu-Ramamurthy Nagar RWAs collective, led by civic volunteer G Kochu Sankar, has submitted a petition to the GBA requesting that the proposed 50 km project include critical missing links in their area.

The collective is pushing for "Tender SURE" style footpaths, a design that integrates underground utilities to prevent the frequent dig-

ging. Their request highlights six major stretches that are devoid of safe walking space, including Horamavu-Kalkere-Rampura Main Road, Hennur-Horamavu Agara (NPS School stretch), TC Palya Main Road, Ramamurthy Nagar Main Road, Babusapalaya Main Road, and Banjara Main Road.

"While walkability has become a

buzzword in Bengaluru, the reality in the K R Puram constituency is different. In Horamavu, even the six busiest arterial roads do not have proper footpaths. We appeal for the approval of 50 km of Tender SURE pavements to cover the six major roads in Horamavu and restore safety to pedestrians," said Sankar.

— Iffath Fahima

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real estate

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tender & notices

COURT NOTICE

न्यायालय:- श्रीमती पूर्णिमा कोठे राजन, न्यायिक मजिस्ट्रेट प्रथम श्रेणी, जिला ग्वालियर म.प्र.

अदोष 5 निम्न 20 वक्ता प्रीति सौता 1908 के अंतर्गत प्रकाशन हेतु प्रकरण क्रमांक 1974/2024 एम.जे.सी.आर. श्रीमती प्रांजल सक्सेना.....आवेदिका

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3/श्रीमती रीता श्रीवास्तव पत्नी श्री अशोक श्रीवास्तव, आयु 65 साल लगभग, व्यवसाय-गृहकार्य, मोबाइल 8005372697

4/अशोक श्रीवास्तव, आयु 72 साल, व्यवसाय स्टेट बैंक रिटायर्ड कर्मचारी, मोबाइल नंबर 9450433029

समस्त निवासीगण प्लेट नंबर 207, इन्द्रप्रस्थ लेड मार्क, हौम नगर, मदनगर लखनऊ 226006 (उत्तरप्रदेश) वर्तमान निवासीगण 2ए, 404 सील स्पेस अरिस्ता अपार्टमेंट, डूबनेकुड़ी, बैलूर 560037 (कर्नाटक)

यह कि, आवेदिका श्रीमती प्रांजल सक्सेना ने आपके विरुद्ध प्रकरण अंतर्गत धारा 12 घरेलू हिंसा से महिलाओं का संरक्षण अधिनियम 2005 के तहत पंजीबद्ध कराया है। आपको इस न्यायालय में सूचना के प्रकाशन के 30 दिवस के भीतर वाद का उत्तर देने के लिए उपस्थित / हाजिर होने के लिए समन किया जाता है। आप न्यायालय में स्वयं या किसी ऐसे प्लीडर (अधिवक्ता) द्वारा उपस्थित हो सकते हैं, जिसे सम्यक् अनुदेश दिए गए हों और जो इस वाद में संबंधित सभी सारवान कथनों का उत्तर दे सकें। आपको यह निर्देश भी दिया जाता है कि उस दिन अपनी प्रतिरक्षा का लिखित कथन प्रस्तुत करें और उस दिन ऐसे सब दस्तावेज जो आपके कब्जे या शक्ति में हों, पेश करें, जिन पर आपका प्रतिरक्षा या प्रत्यावेदन या प्रतिदावा आधारित हो, और यदि आप अन्य किसी दस्तावेज पर वाहे वह आपके कब्जे या शक्ति में हो अपनी प्रतिरक्षा या प्रत्यावेदन के समर्थन में साक्ष्य के रूप में निर्भर करते हैं तो ऐसे सभी दस्तावेज की लिखित कथन के साथ उपलब्ध की जाने वाली सूची में प्रविष्ट करें।

आपको सूचित किया जाता है कि यदि आप उपर बताई गई अवधि में इस न्यायालय में उपस्थित नहीं होते हैं तो प्रकरण की एकपक्षीय सुनवाई कर उसका निपटारा आपकी अनुपस्थिति में किया जाएगा। साथ ही यह भी सूचित किया जाता है कि यदि आप निराकरण मध्यस्थ के माध्यम से करने के इच्छुक हो तो पीठासीन अधिकारी को अवगत करावें। यह आज तारीख 23/02/2026 को मेरे हस्ताक्षर से और न्यायालय की मुहर लगाकर दिया गया है।

(**पूणिमा कोठे राजन**)
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जिला ग्वालियर म.प्र.

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personal

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Vincent Kiran Kumar Anthony S/o Anthony R/o No 22,Mariyanna Palya,H.A.farm, Mariyanna Palya, B'luru 560024 have changed my name to Vincent Kiran Kumar.

I, Rajendra R/o # 6/76 , Ainoli Post, Chincholi Tq, Kalaburgai Dist - 585307 have changed my minor daughter's name from Harshika to Harshika Chincholikar.

I, Masum Raja R/o #48,6th Cross,16th Main, BTM Layout 2nd Stage B'luru-560076 have changed my name to Mohammed Masum Raja.

I Tirupati Hanumanthappa S/o Bhimaiah Bhimappa R/o 1751,shanthi Nikethan, municipal Colony,5th Main,2nd cross, Chitradurga 577501 KA have changed my name to Tirupathi Hanumanthappa.

I Mahavir Tated S/O, Paramsal Tated R/o Nakoda Krupa, No 87, 2nd Main, 2nd Cross, Bsk 3rd Stage, Katriguppe East, Chennamankere Ackhattu, Bengaluru 560085 have changed my name to Mahaveer Tated.

I Madhu Kumari Singh W/O, Praveen Singh R/o Flat No Lavender A 10 ,regency Pinnacle Hights , Rachenahalli Main Road, Thanisandra , Bangalore 560077 have changed my name to Madhu Singh

I, Babitha Maliamave Kurian W/o Joseph Raju Cheeran Verghese R/o Flat No. 12064, Prestige Lakeside Habitat, Gunjur Village, Bangalore -87 have changed my name to Babitha Raju for all purpose

I, Sujata Hosabanna Nayak, W/o Rajeev Sarvamitra Shastri, residing at E033 Pariwar Wise Palm Springs HSR Extension have changed my name from Sujata Nayak to Sujata Hosabanna Nayak.

I, Malar Chezian T C R/o G2 Unitech Pearl, Yellunkunte, Hosapalya Main Rd, Hsr Subdivision, Bengaluru 560068, have changed my minor son's name from Niranjana Malar Chezian to Niranjana M.

I, SHRUTHI, D / o Krishnamurthy aged 39,R/O at Bangalore have changed the name from Shruthi to Shruthi Bhat for all purposes. Affidavit dt 04/03/2026 sworn before the Notary Hemalatha.P Bangalore.

WE, Rakesh C and Anusha V, residing at No. 102/25, Soundarya Nilaya, 1st Floor, 1st Main Road, 6th Cross, Kamakshipalya, Bengaluru – 560079, hereby inform that our minor daughter's name has been changed from "Poshita Rakesh" (aged 3 months) to "Preksha R."

I, Patoliya Dharmesh Kumar Manubhai S/O, Manubhai Patoliya R/o 01/02 ,2nd Floor, 3rd Cross, Shrikantapura, Ancephalya, Mayanna Layout, Doddabidarakallu, Bangalore 560073 have changed my name to Patoliya Dharmesh Kumar.

I Priya Kaleyanda W/O, Prowin K T R/o 319 1 D Cross Hrbr L/o 3rd Block Kalyan Nagar B-84 have changed my name to Priya Kaleyanda Prowin.

I Varadharaj Ramaiah S/O, Ramaiah R/o N0-6/1,sapthagiri Nilaya,2nd Cross,chitra Layout, Near Attur Lake,yelahanka,bengaluru-560064 have changed my name to Varadaraj Ramaiah.

I, Mukunda Prabhu S/o, Prabhu Chottanahalli Guru Venkatesh R/o No 368,3rd Main,2nd Phase,1st Stage, Manjunatha Nagar,rajajinagar, B'luru 560010 have changed my name to Vihan Prabhu.

I Gerald John Urban Pereira S/O, Edwin Xavier Pereira R/o Kumbrikhan Estate, Coove Post, Mudigere Taluk, Chikkamagaluru - 577160 (karnataka) have changed my name to Gerald Pereira.

I, VIDYA RAMACHANDRAN @ VIDYA RAM @ VIDYA R @ VIDYA SESHAGIRI RAO @ VIDYA S, W/o R Ramachandran, residing at No. E-3, Green Court Apartment, 8th Main, 4th Block, Vidyananyapura, Bangalore-560097. I have changed my name to S VIDYA, vide affidavit dt: 05-03-2026 before notary Renuka .C, Bangalore.

I, Sanika Agte D/o Mr Rajesh Shriram Agte , R/o T3-7A, SNN Clermont, Veeranyapalya, Bengaluru 560045, have changed my name from Sanika Agte to Sanika Rajesh Agte, for all future purposes.

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HELPING CHILDREN UNDERSTAND WAR

Experts urge parents discuss conflict openly, support children facing fear, anxiety and confusion



The latest conflict in the Middle East is evolving quickly and becoming increasingly complex. For many children, it can be difficult to understand the events they see on social media, hear adults discussing anxiously, or experience directly in their surroundings. Experts say that exposure to war — even indirectly — can affect how children think, feel and behave.

Child psychologists and development specialists emphasize that discussing these events openly can help children process what they are seeing and hearing. Avoiding the topic, they warn, may leave children confused and frightened.

"Sometimes adults think if they don't talk about something difficult, then it doesn't exist. But we know that's not the reality in children's lives," said Rebecca Smith, global head of child protection at Save the Children, an international aid and advocacy organization. "Ignoring or avoiding the topic of conflict can lead to children feeling lost, alone and scared. It is essential to have

open and honest conversations with children to help them process what is happening."

Experts recommend starting by asking children what they already know about events taking place in places such as Ukraine, Gaza, Iran, Israel or Sudan. Understanding a child's current knowledge can help adults guide the conversation and address emotions such as fear, sadness, anger or anxiety.

Some children may know little about the escalation of tensions between the United States and Israel on one side and Iran and its allies on the other. Others may know far more than their families realize and may suppress their feelings. Children living in or visiting regions affected by conflict may have witnessed weapons lighting up the night sky, heard explosions or even known people who were killed or forced to leave their homes.

"For some children where missiles are now visible in the skies, this might be an entirely new and terrifying experience," Smith said. "When events like this happen, they disrupt a child

and family's sense of safety. What once felt stable and secure may suddenly feel uncertain."

To help children work through their emotions, experts say that trusted adults must also take care of their own mental health. Guidance from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network notes that when adults share their feelings in a calm way, it can help children understand values such as empathy and compassion. However, adults should avoid assuming what children might be thinking or feeling.

If children do not want to talk immediately, experts recommend patience. Adults should reassure them that they are available whenever the child is ready to share.

"It is necessary to respect a child's ability to refuse communication or not to talk about something," said child psychologist Nataliia Sosnovenko. She works with Voices of Children, a Ukrainian organization that provides psychological support to young people affected by the war with Russia. "Children can have their

own feelings and states which they may not want to share right away."

When children begin asking questions or expressing their emotions, experts say adults should acknowledge their feelings and respond honestly. At the same time, explanations should be appropriate for the child's age and maturity.

The American Psychological Association advises parents to give basic and age appropriate information about conflicts while avoiding unnecessary details that might increase anxiety. Parents are usually best placed to judge how much information their children can handle.

Families who have relatives or friends in conflict zones may need additional conversations about safety and uncertainty. Some experts recommend developing a simple family plan in case separation occurs during emergencies. Practicing the plan calmly can help children feel more prepared and secure.

Younger children may understand the simple idea that two countries or groups are fighting, but they often struggle to distinguish between events they see on television and what is happening around them. For children living far from conflict zones, repeated exposure to dramatic images on social media or television can make war feel much closer than it actually is. In such situations reassurance about their safety becomes especially important.

Older children and teenagers are more likely to understand the consequences of war and may ask deeper questions about politics, justice and humanitarian concerns. Experts suggest focusing on actions within a child's control such as supporting humanitarian efforts, staying informed through reliable sources or discussing misinformation online.

Experts also say adults can admit when they do not have all the answers. Limiting distressing news exposure and encouraging critical thinking online can protect children. Caregivers should remind them they are safe and supported. When conflict cannot be avoided, professional psychological help may assist children in processing trauma and building coping skills. With patience, honesty and emotional support families can help. —AP

MIND, BODY & HEART



All you need to know about...

Hidden fertility factors

Regular cycles

Many women believe that having regular periods automatically means they should be able to conceive easily. However, fertility experts say that a predictable menstrual cycle does not always guarantee pregnancy. A regular cycle mainly indicates that the brain and ovaries are communicating properly through hormonal signals, which usually leads to ovulation around the middle of the cycle.

Hidden conditions

Certain medical conditions can affect fertility even when menstrual cycles appear normal. Mild forms of polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), for example, may still allow regular periods in some women but can disrupt ovulation and egg development. These conditions often go unnoticed until a woman begins trying to conceive and seeks medical evaluation.

Hormonal issues

Subtle hormonal imbalances can also play a role. Thyroid disorders, high prolactin levels and luteal phase defects may affect fertility even if menstrual cycles occur like clockwork. These issues can influence egg quality, ovulation strength or the uterine environment needed for implantation. Because the symptoms are often mild, many women remain unaware of these problems until fertility challenges arise.

Other factors

Fertility depends on more than the menstrual cycle alone. Structural problems such as blocked fallopian tubes or uterine abnormalities can prevent sperm and egg from meeting. Experts recommend seeking medical advice if pregnancy does not occur after a year of regular, unprotected intercourse, or after six months for women above 35. Early evaluation can identify causes and help explore suitable treatment options.

—Femina



MIRRORLIGHTS

Breaking workplace drinking culture, choosing sobriety

Workplace culture in many industries still revolves around social drinking, from after-work happy hours to client meetings at bars. For people recovering from alcohol addiction, these situations can create pressure and anxiety. Many worry that refusing drinks could lead to judgment from colleagues or even affect career opportunities. Experts say protecting sobriety must remain the top priority, even if uncomfortable conversations are required.

Lisa Smith, a former lawyer

who now advises organizations on recovery-friendly workplaces, says setting clear boundaries is essential. People in recovery do not always need to explain their decision in detail. Sometimes a simple refusal is enough. Smith notes that many employees assume coworkers will question their choices, but in reality most people pay little attention to what others are drinking.

Changing workplace attitudes are also helping normalize sobriety. Younger employees are

more open about mental health and substance use issues, and the availability of mocktails and non-alcoholic beverages makes it easier for people to participate in social events without drinking alcohol. Some workers in recovery choose to skip certain gatherings or leave early while maintaining professional relationships in other ways.

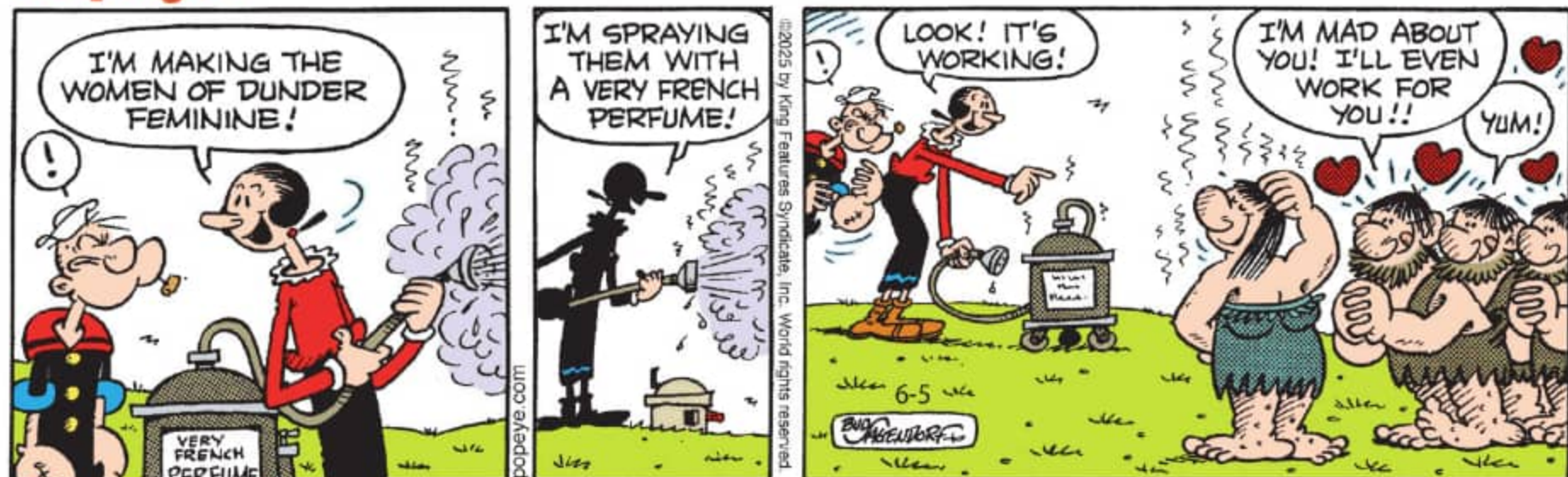
Experts also say employers benefit from supporting recovery-friendly environments. People committed to recovery programs

are often dependable, productive and motivated employees. Companies can promote inclusion by offering alcohol-free social events, providing access to recovery meetings or simply ensuring non-alcoholic options are easily available. Creating a supportive culture helps employees maintain sobriety while still building meaningful workplace connections. Supportive policies reduce stigma, encourage openness, and help workers balance professional life with recovery without feeling isolated or pressured to drink.

—By Jaimie Ding AP

COMICS

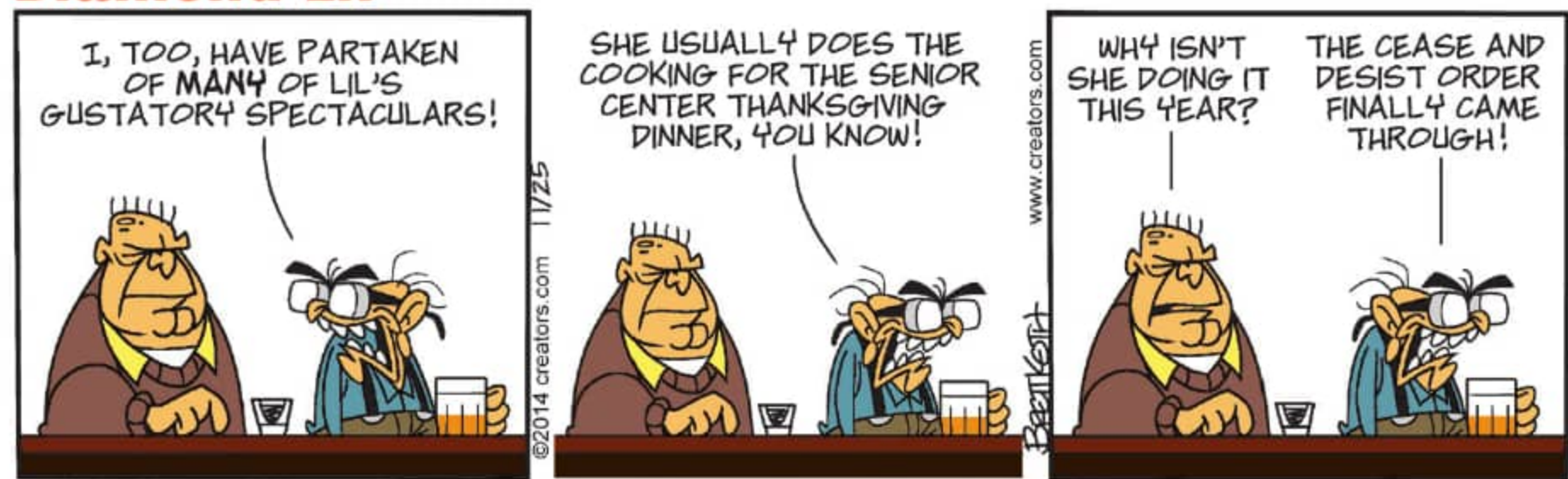
Popeye



Bizarrotrip



Diamond Lil



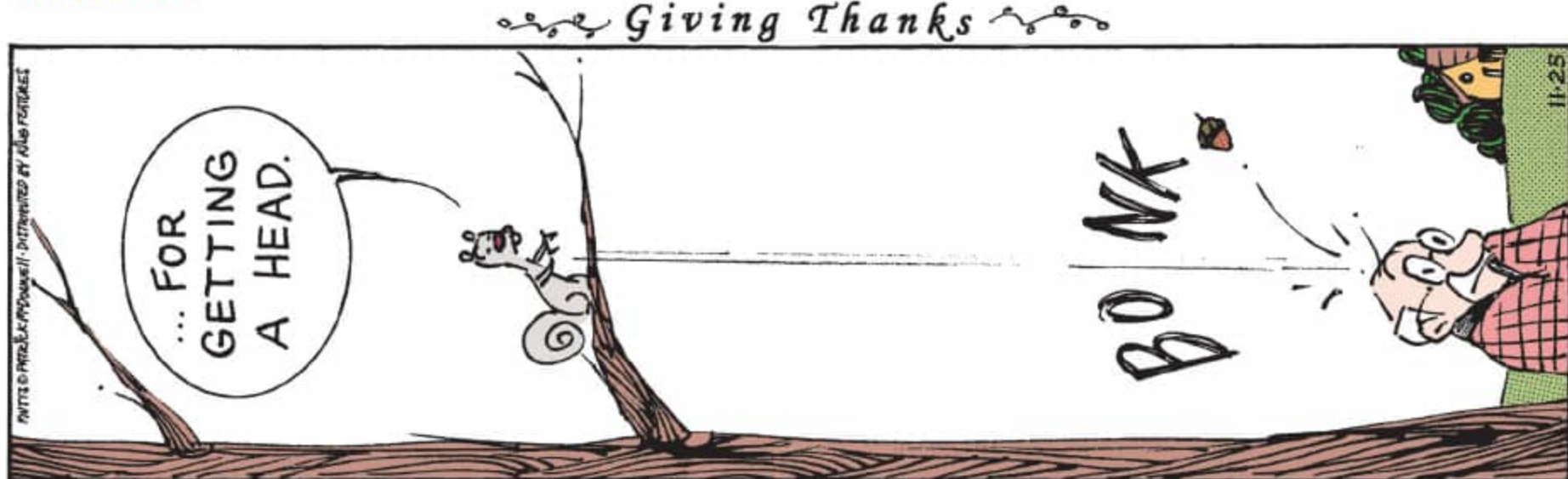
Hart of the city



Crankshaft

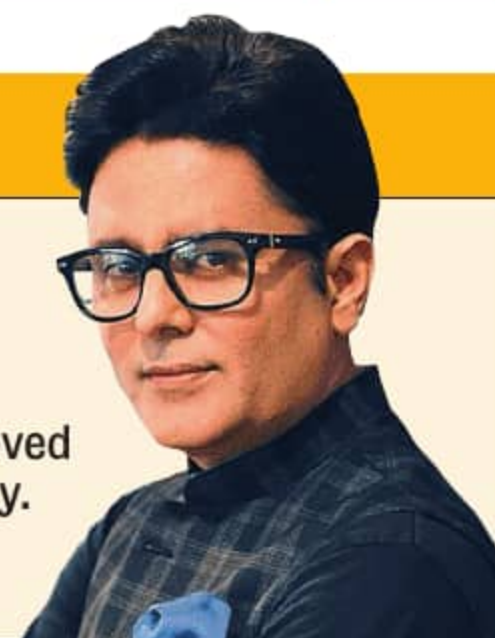


Mutts



WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR



If it's your birthday today

Warmth surrounds your connections today. Love feels nurturing and emotionally rich. Career matters benefit from your supportive leadership style. Finances stabilize through responsible generosity. Travel may involve loved ones, strengthening bonds. Home becomes a sanctuary of comfort and beauty. You're reminded that caring for others while honoring yourself creates harmony across every area of life.

Aries Mar 21 - Apr 20

Maintain a steady pace and resist pressure to accelerate for others. There will be ample time later to shift gears, demonstrate skills, and advance confidently when conditions truly favour you.



Leo Jul 24 - Aug 23

You believe an upcoming project can succeed, but ensure funding is secure before beginning. Waiting until later this month, when conditions improve, may prove the wiser strategy for long-term success.



Sagittarius Nov 23 - Dec 22

Expect drama before the weekend and you'll receive it. Recent weeks felt tame, but now excitement returns, ushering in a longer phase of lively experiences adventure, surprises, momentum, growth, joy.



Taurus Apr 21 - May 20

A lingering worry from recent weeks resolves today, or at least diminishes as bigger priorities emerge. In the wider picture, it proves minor and unworthy of continued concern overall now.



Virgo Aug 24 - Sep 23

Though the world feels chaotic, you refuse to be derailed. Keep attention fixed on your primary goal today, and disorder can be transformed into advantage through focus, discipline, patience, adaptability.



Capricorn Dec 23 - Jan 20

Stop idealizing the past as better than now; it wasn't. Envision your perfect day and take concrete steps today to turn that vision into reality with discipline, courage, consistency, purpose.



Gemini May 21 - Jun 21

Feel free to introduce changes at home and work before the weekend, but don't expect universal support. Not everyone shares your daring spirit, so adapt and proceed independently if needed.



Libra Sep 24 - Oct 22

People rarely change, and trying to force them wastes energy. Follow your own course, ignore distractions, and life becomes both enjoyable and successful without unnecessary struggle drama, pressure, comparison, guilt.



Aquarius Jan 21 - Feb 19

If loved ones act disruptive today, ignore the behaviour. They likely seek attention, and refusing engagement will quickly send them elsewhere to perform their dramas, theatrics, complaints, loudly, briefly, away.



Cancer Jun 22 - July 23

Events within the next day help you accept the past no longer defines tomorrow. Release fantasies of reversing time and embrace progress, because resisting change never delivers lasting results peace.



Scorpio Oct 23 - Nov 22

Having a meaningful focus helps, yet sensible pacing is essential. If your work demands heavy physical, mental, and emotional effort, rest strategically to avoid burnout maintain stamina, balance, health, longevity.

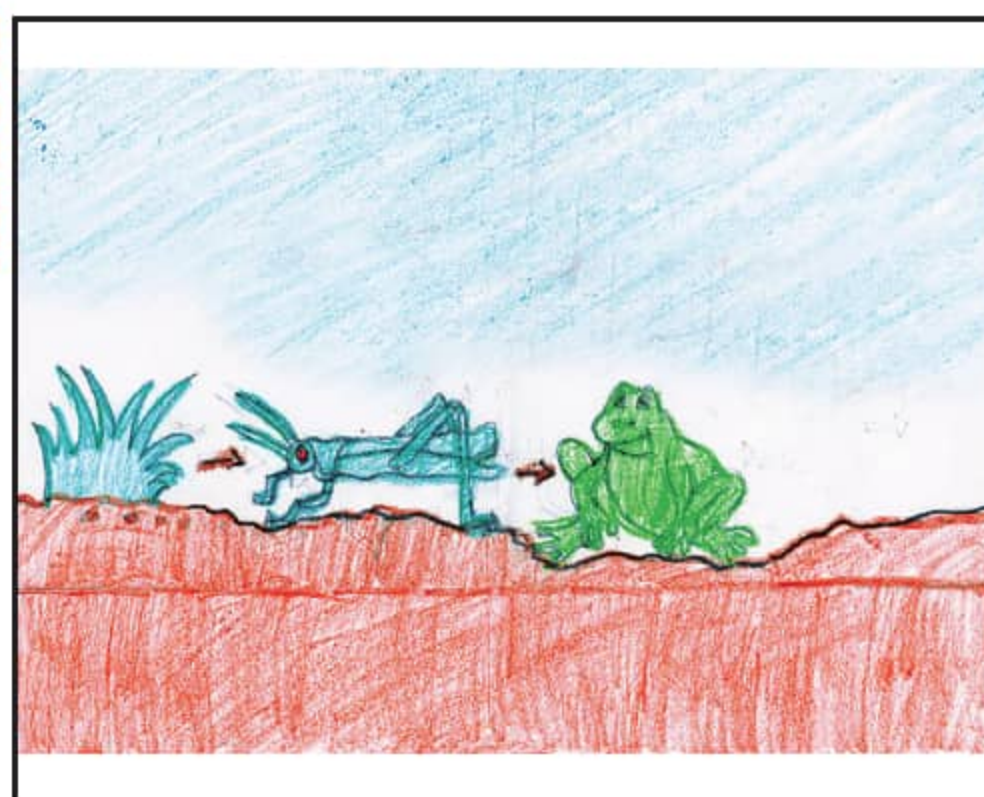


Pisces Feb 20 - Mar 20

With good luck coming your way, caution isn't required. Aim higher, set bold goals, and reach for stars; even shortfalls place you ahead of others confidently, bravely, ambitiously, optimistically, rising.

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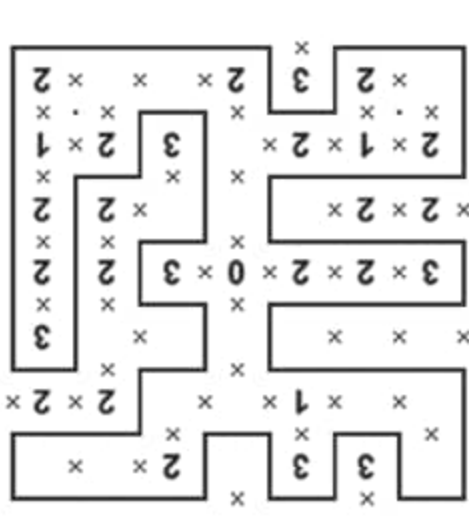
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SANDALWOOD SHOTS

Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Pinning hopes

Upcoming actress Samhita Vinya is pinning her hopes on the film Majestic 2 scheduled for release this Friday. This will be her third movie to be released this year after GST and Mixing Preethi.

"I am confident of receiving appreciation from moviegoers who watch Majestic 2. I worked hard and the movie has all elements to entertain all audiences. I was injured during the filming of a lengthy chasing scene. I play a village belle who



comes to Bengaluru to earn a livelihood," says Samhita.

Samhita, who hails from Sakaleshpur, considers late heroine Kalpana as her role model. "I have had a passion for movies since childhood and Kalpana madam was my favourite heroine. I nourished

an ambition of becoming a actor when I watched a Kannada movie during my school days," she said.

She debuted in Sandalwood with Haalu Thuppa in 2018. "My parents were not happy with my decision to act in movies. I came to Bengaluru without informing them and stayed with a friend for two years to try my luck. I went home after the release of Haalu Thuppa. After watching my movies my parents allowed me to continue," she said. Her movies Swabhimani, Vidhooshaka, and Yaako Bejaaru are yet to be released.

Going great guns

Director Harivarasanam is over the moon with the success of his maiden movie Maggi Pusthaka. The movie, released on February 13, is all set to complete 25 days of screening. The increase in box-office collections in Bengaluru, Mysuru, and Shivamogga has encouraged the director and producer of the movie to increase the number of screens gradually from next week.

"As of now, Maggi Pusthaka is being screened at eight single screen theaters and seven screens at multiplexes. Our objective is to increase the screens up to 50 in a week or two. I am very happy to share the news about many single screen theater owners wanting to screen this movie at their theaters," said Harivar-



asanam.

The director said that the producer and distributor have decided to add 25 more theaters for screening this movie. "Initially, our focus was on multiplexes. Now, we want to screen it at single screen theaters in the North Karnataka region," the director said.

The movie was supported by Yathiraj and his friends and the director under the Chinnaswamy Films banner. K Muneendra of MP Films is the official distributor for this movie. "I am very happy with the success of Maggi Pusthaka," said Muneendra.

HUMOUR, BUT KEEP IT DARK

Aditya Roy Kapur all set to headline slasher comedy

Bollywood actor Aditya Roy Kapur is set to headline an upcoming slasher comedy that blends horror with satire and dark humour. While the film is yet to receive an official title it promises a fresh take on the horror genre by combining scares with absurd comedy and self-aware storytelling.

Reports from Variety says that the project will be directed by Collin D'Cunha, marking his feature film directorial debut. With pre-production already underway the film is expected to go on floors in May 2026.

Before stepping into filmmaking for the big screen, D'Cunha directed popular web series including Call Me Bae starring Ananya Panday and Do You Wanna Partner? featuring Tamannaah Bhatia and Dia Mirza.

The team is currently working on finalising the script and casting actors for other pivotal roles. The film's tone is expected to rely heavily on exaggerated horror setups paired with comedic twists. Further details regarding the film's supporting cast and release timeline are likely to be revealed in the coming months.

Meanwhile, speculation recently circulated that Aditya Roy Kapur would collaborate again with filmmaker Mohit Suri on a new project backed by Yash Raj Films. Addressing these rumours in an exclusive conversation with Bombay Times, Suri clarified that the reports were inaccurate. "I meet Aditya Roy Kapoor and Shaad Randhawa to play cricket. We hang out together." The filmmaker also confirmed that no professional discussions had taken place regarding the project. "Aditya is a close friend of mine, but we haven't met for work at all. The script that I am working on is not even ready..."

—ETimes



Richa in Ali's footsteps

Since her debut in 2008, Richa Chadha has steadily built a distinctive place in Bollywood. Nearly twenty years later, the actress feels it's time to expand her horizons and pursue new possibilities in Western cinema. She wants to make her mark in international films, inspired by her husband Ali Fazal, who has acted in 'Furious 7' (2015), 'Victoria & Abdul' (2017), 'Death on the Nile' (2022), and 'Kandahar' (2023).

As reported in Hindustan Times, she said, "I would love to follow in Ali's footsteps and get something concrete in the West. Who doesn't want that? He's just been so amazing at straddling both worlds. Seeing him handle both worlds so beautifully is simply amazing in its own way."

Having already worked on several international projects, Richa isn't entirely new to the global film scene. Her performances in 'Words with Gods' (2014), an Indian-Mexican-American production, the Indo-French film 'Masaan' (2015), and the Indo-American drama 'Love Sonia' (2018) introduced her to audiences beyond India. This time, however, she has a clearer vision for her international journey. "If I get a good script and character, working in Hollywood would definitely be something that I would love to do," she adds.

—ETimes



Arjun Tendulkar's star-studded wedding

When Shah Rukh Khan steps into a room, it rarely goes unnoticed and on Thursday noon, it was no different. The Bollywood superstar, who was among the top guests at Arjun Tendulkar's wedding, turned heads as he arrived to bless the couple.

Arjun, the son of cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar, married long-time girlfriend and entrepreneur Saaniya Chandhok in a grand ceremony attended by several well-known names from the worlds of film, sports, and business.

King Khan arrived at the venue in



style alongside his wife Gauri Khan and daughter Suhana. The 'Pathaan' actor, who usually keeps a low profile and avoids posing for the paps, ditched it this time. The trio also made sure to pose for the paparazzi stationed as they



entered the wedding venue.

Aamir Khan was also seen at the wedding. The 'Lagaan' actor arrived at the venue dressed in a red kurta with white pyjamas. He greeted photographers briefly before heading inside the venue.

Amitabh Bachchan, Jaya Bachchan, Abhishek Bachchan, and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan were also present at the venue.

Star spotting

Aishwarya Rai Bachchan was back on the film sets this week, shooting for her next. The actress, who has been keeping a low profile, delighted fans with her latest selfie from the sets.

A heartwarming behind-the-scenes moment from the sets has turned up online, making fans go gaga over the actress' new look and her sweet moment with her young co-star. In the pictures shared on various fan handles, Ash is seen posing for a selfie with a curly-haired child actor. While the actress looked radiant in shades of white, wearing her hair in loose waves, the child, dressed in a pastel green outfit, was seen looking rather shy.

While there has been no new film announcement, the shoot is believed to be for an upcoming ad, for which she is the brand ambassador. Details about the project remain under wraps, but for fans, the photos from the sets were welcomed as it was among the few clicks of the actress since she last made her appearance during the Christmas and New Year's break.

—ETimes



—ANI